



Usual Place, September 19, 2023

The meeting was convened at 6:01 PM.

Items for the good of the order:

Annual Arleigh Williams's forum honoring their services and legacy to UC Berkeley

Acknowledged new positions for Scribe, Steward board, and the newly unofficial instituted Interlocutor positions.

Items for the good of the University: Campus Vendors and Contractors

What type of food diversity is there around Berkeley? How can the university better represent different cultures through food?

- Healthy food vs. fast food? Organic food?
- What relationship does the university and community have with local street vendors?
- How accessible are spaces on campus for use by student clubs?
- Resources for faculty booking spaces
- Facilities that are free to use vs. paid for through a vendor
- Sproul events/flyering

Fellows discussed the unofficial role of the interlocutor. They agreed that the school's university faculty and administration should engage in conversations pertaining to students since they influence campus policies.

The Warden opened the floor for a discussion on the topic at hand.

A Fellow spoke on the topic and mentioned the lack of ethnic foods in the dining halls. They questioned how the university could incorporate ethnic food places within the institution.

Another Fellow agreed with the previous speaker and added that dining halls should have food accommodations for different religious or traditional foods. However, they were unsure about the cost of this endeavor.

A Fellow questioned whether the food courts are open and mentioned how the university was able to bring in Panda Express, with the corporation contributing \$1 million for student causes. They extended the question to the floor: 'Do you use the food court?'

Another Fellow responded to the posted questions and mentioned how students need 'flex dollars' or a meal plan to be able to purchase food. They also noted the high pricing system at these food courts, especially for non-freshmen or those without a meal plan. The Fellow mentioned how students sometimes do not use the food pantry because of the associated stigmas.

Another Fellow agreed with the previous Fellow regarding the expensive food options on campus, including MLK's B-North section. They contrasted UCB campus with other campuses, pointing out that the campus does not have many fast food options, especially for budget-conscious students.

A Fellow mentioned an ordinance and discussed having small businesses instead of corporations. They suggested finding a balance between what people want and giving back to the community, both culturally and economically.

Another Fellow pointed out how wasteful 'flex dollars' can be and suggested an institutional way to incentivize students to donate their food (or flex dollars) to those in need. They also mentioned that in other universities (in Boise & Idaho), students can use their 'flex dollars' in their food courts, including places like Chick-Fil-A. The Fellow noted that there are too many boba places on campus and suggested bringing in more fast food options.

Another Fellow added that Cal Poly Pomona also allows students to spend their flex dollars in their food courts. They emphasized the need for coordinating traditional foods in dining halls, and limit the cultural tokenization.

A Fellow mentioned Swipe-Out-Hunger, a program that utilizes extra flex dollars and meal plan dollars to combat food insecurity issues on-and-off-campus. They also mentioned the Berkeley Food Institute, which studies food systems and helps pay other students for housing and food, thus keeping prices low for other services. They pointed out that the prevalence of boba shops is due to their high profit margins and low capital expenditure. The biggest food provider on campus is the dining hall, followed by students bringing their own food, which makes it challenging to create diverse options. The Fellow mentioned La Cocina, a program for small entrepreneurial women from marginalized backgrounds, which did not work due to limitations in using the meal plan program. They added that Berkeley has been anti-chain and establishment.

A Fellow changed the topic to coffee shop culture on campus, which is a significant part of student culture. They suggested that these coffee shops should offer more diverse and nutritious meal options.

Another Fellow brought up meal swipes and flex dollars, particularly for freshmen with guaranteed housing. They mentioned that the GBC has good food but is extremely crowded during eating hours. They suggested donating excess food to homeless people. They also talked about the challenges of dealing with realtors, who are selective and drive up overhead costs for new people trying to obtain a retail space near campus.

Another Fellow mentioned programs to donate flex dollars and emphasized the high cost and limited hours of accessibility at the MLK food court.

Another Fellow mentioned how campus administrators and faculty meet to determine food options available at the student union. They emphasized the importance of offering healthy food options and suggested that if students go to the operation store, more diverse and cost-effective food options could be available. Revenue generated in the MLK food court goes to support different groups on campus.

Another Fellow mentioned past boycotts of Pepsi and fair working conditions issues related to their employees. They also brought up the strategic placement of food trucks and eatery places on campus – especially for freshman students who may get the wrong impression about food culture on campus. That is, these food trucks are on campus only during orientation week. They discussed coffee culture and mentioned Strada's dominance in the surrounding area. They also noted the irony of partnering with Nike while not wanting more chain food options on campus.

Another Fellow shifted the conversation back to licensing and partnerships with companies and talked about incorporating food places within the campus, not just targeting freshmen.

A Fellow brought the conversation back to Nike, mentioning that their athletic wear quality has declined compared to Under Armour. They emphasized that students should not have to protest for food on campus and noted the disconnect between faculty and student tastes.

Another Fellow shifted the conversation to the university's role as a business rather than an educational institution. They mentioned the Greek Theater hosting events using the ASUC budget.

A Fellow built upon the fact that the university demands on campus clubs to cater food through the institution. Despite these students clubs on campus bringing revenue and increasing brand awareness for the university, students are facing high costs for food that the campus should assist with. They pointed out that expenses for food alone have increased from \$300 to \$5,000.

Another Fellows discussed the university being a combination of an institution and a community. They raised questions about how the community should strategize for change and suggested that the university should vet vendors more carefully.

A Fellow clarified the Pepsi partnership, mentioning that Pepsi offered the ASUC a larger portion of revenue that supported athletics and other student groups on campus. They underscored the importance of students voicing their opinions during contract renewals, and noted the closure of another vendor for two years.

A Fellow built upon the previous comments, discussing the late-night snacks at Cross Roads dining halls and their accessibility. They wished for more locations like Brown's on the north side where students could spend their meal swipes and flex dollars.

Another Fellow agreed with the previous speaker and expressed disappointment in the discontinuation of late-night dining at Cross Roads. They also criticized the university for delegitimizing student power on campus and wished for more substantial student influence.

Another Fellow mentioned that students working in the dining hall face unfavorable working conditions. They also suggested the need for a grocery store near campus, as the surrounding ones are too far.

Another Fellow mentioned that the university should work toward having a grocery store on campus. They shifted the conversation to housing conditions, emphasizing the overcrowding and the university's focus on profit.

The Warden encouraged Fellows to provide solutions.

Another Fellow shared their experience working at the dining hall, mentioning the shortage of staff to provide high-quality food. They also highlighted the issue of homelessness being 10% of undergrads and grad students, as well as UC Berkeley campus being a food desert. They suggested raising awareness for Food Stamps.

Another Fellow mentioned the Berkeley Student Food Cooperative, which aims to provide cheap meals to students.

Another Fellow discussed the university's massive attrition rate and how it complicates hiring. They clarified that this information wasn't intended to justify the university's lack of hiring practices.

Another Fellow mentioned that current students have it better than before but may not fully understand different perspectives, especially community issues. They referenced the Free Speech Movement and the importance of listening to students. They suggested facilitating exchanges between alumni and current students to better understand each other's struggles and issues.

A Fellow expressed frustration and also pointed out that the university operates under the direction of the Regents. They emphasized the need to identify loopholes and understand the origins of campus-wide these policies that shape the student experience.

Discussion Adjourned at 7:30 PM. The Meeting closed in Song. Notes were compiled by the Chronicler.